

NP

Our Lady of the Wayside



Saint Jove Road
Quebec

P5043 G64



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
University of Toronto



OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE

OUR LADY
OF THE WAYSIDE



OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE

I. — HISTORICAL SKETCH

*Ave, Maris stella,
Iter para tutum*

AMONG the numerous pictures of the Madonna venerated at Rome, the miraculous picture of Our Lady of the Wayside is not the least worthy of interest nor the least honored. It is celebrated for its antiquity, connoisseurs dating it even from the fifth century. This makes it, therefore, one of the most ancient paintings of the Mother of God attributed to the Latin brush. The picture represents the Blessed Virgin holding in her arms the Infant Jesus, whose right hand is uplifted in benediction, and whose left hand grasps a book. Upon the right shoulder of the Virgin rests a star.

This interesting piece of art was originally a mural decoration, the portion of cement upon which the pious artist executed his design being detached from the wall for the purpose of transportation. The event occurred, probably, in the twelfth century, when a noble Roman family, named Astalli, erected a sanctuary in honor of this Madonna, at the foot of the Capitol.

Whence comes the name "Our Lady of the Wayside", or "della Strata"? The title is no doubt due to the fact that the painting was, in the beginning, placed upon the street in one of the *niches* in open air so common in Rome and other Italian cities, and Our Lord no doubt designed, furthermore, to excite the piety of the faithful by this new title, to invoke Mary as the star ever ready to guide faltering steps to the narrow path which leads to Heaven.

The image of Our Lady of the Wayside is especially famous for having been the object of a particular devotion on the part of Saint Ignatius Loyola and his companions, a devotion which has become a tradition in the Society of Jesus, as the honors which are continually heaped upon the sacred memento in the Church of the Gesu, at Rome, amply prove.

From the fifth to the sixteenth century nothing definite is known in regard to the public veneration of this Madonna, except the fact of the erection of the Astalli chapel, as has been already mentioned. But it is easy to follow the movement since the time of the holy founder of the Society of Jesus, as it was he who gave it a lasting impetus and renown.

In 1538, when the hero of Pampeluna, having joined the army of Jesus-Christ, came to Rome with his companions to place himself at the disposal of the Holy See, and set forth on the conquest of the world, it was in the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Wayside that the Blessed Virgin spoke most clearly to him. Ignatius Loyola felt also a singular love for this especial image. He visited its shrine frequently, and his greatest happiness was in offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass at its altar. He even urged the pastor of the church, Pietro Codace, to make him a gift of the venerated picture, saying that he would build a vast and magnificent church in its honor. The request was refused, but God, without doubt in answer to the prayers of Ignatius, caused a miraculous change to take place in the heart of Codace, for within a short space of time he sought out the Saint, and offered him not only the church but his own person also. He was duly received into the new Order, thus becoming the first Italian Jesuit.

As for the church, Pope Paul III later ratified the gift of Codace; the edifice passed into the possession of the recently-founded Order. From this sanctuary the illustrious Saint Francis Xavier and his companions set forth on their perilous missions, strong in the belief of the protection

of their favorite Virgin. Edified by their example, the Roman populace flocked to the new chapel of the Jesuits, and devotion to their Protectress took on renewed fervor.

In 1565, Saint Francis Borgia, having been created General of the Order, resolved to enlarge the sacred edifice, already become too small to meet the demands of the faithful. He was prevented from carrying out his pious intention by lack of funds; but in 1568, God inspired the Cardinal Farnese with similar designs, which were fulfilled in the erection of a structure truly royal in its magnificence. This church, the Gesu, received with great pomp and ceremony, in 1575, the venerable picture of Our Lady of the Wayside, and the old chapel, so long her humble retreat, was demolished. The Virgin so much loved by Ignatius had at last found a temple worthy of her dignity; the desire of her servant was realized.

The love of the people for Our Lady of the Wayside continued to increase, and we find the good Mother of Heaven rewarding the confidence of her children by many and great favors. Besides these humble servitors, a coterie of brilliant ecclesiastics also loved to kneel at her feet. Following Saint Ignatius, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Francis Borgia and their companions, come the three angelic patrons of youth, Saint Aloysius, Saint Stanislaus Kostka and Saint John Berchmans. Also may be noted Blessed Peter Canisius, the happy martyr Ignatius Azevedo, and the compatriot of Saint Stanislaus, and a Jesuit also like him, Father Albert Menciski. This priest had received from Mary, among other favors, the grace of vocation, which the Blessed Virgin offered him under the symbol of a golden apple. From her he also obtained the promise of martyrdom, which promise was given him during a Mass which he was celebrating at the altar of Our Lady of the Wayside. He became in reality a most glorious martyr, his agony being among the most prolonged of those called upon to suffer death for the Church in Japan. For six days he endured the most excruciating tortures, at the end of which he rendered up his soul gloriously to God.

Noticeable among the emulators of the piety of the sons of Saint Ignatius are Saint Philip Neri, Saint Charles Borromeo, Saint Francis of Sales, Saint Camillus of Lellis, Saint Leonard of Port Maurice and Saint John Baptist of Rossi.

The marvels which were showered upon the faithful worshippers of Our Lady of the Wayside caused the Chapter of the Vatican, in 1638, to bestow upon the venerated image the honors of coronation; but the crown of gold which was the gift of the occasion, together with many other articles of great value, disappeared in the general pillage of Roman churches by the Revolutionists, during the latter part of the eighteenth century. A second crown repaired, in 1885, this sacrilegious theft, the ceremony which took place on the seventh of June, being of unusual splendor. On this occasion, besides the royal diadem placed upon the brow of the Blessed Mother, there was imposed also upon the head of the Divine Infant an imperial crown of a value befitting its sacred dignity. Both these crowns of exquisite workmanship were adorned with precious stones, the gifts of certain wealthy persons.

In Canada, also, Our Lady of the Wayside is honored. In 1894, thanks to the generosity of M. le chevalier Louis de Gonzague Baillairgé, and to the charity of a number of citizens of Quebec, Reverend Father Désy, then Superior of the Jesuits in that city, was enabled to erect to this Madonna a beautiful sanctuary, pleasantly situated upon the Saint Foye Road.¹ The Honorable Judge Routhier, in his "*Quebec and Levis*," has given a fine description of this chapel. We quote the principal passages :

"Mount then the steps and you will be charmed. You will see nothing gloomy, depressing, austere. All is bright, smiling, restful, charming. It is truly well named, this little church. Situated on the roadside, it seems to invite the weary travellers of this life to enter and rest themselves, while upon the porch a statue of the Blessed Virgin stands as if in welcome, holding in her arms the Divine Child whose hand is outstretched in gentle benediction.

¹ George E. Tanguay, architect.

"The church of Our Lady of the Wayside contains only a single nave, crossed by a transept which gives it the form of a cross. There are neither galleries nor colonades, but upon the walls are some half-length columns crowned by tasteful cornices, which sus-



CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE,
QUEBEC

tain arches serving for the Stations of the Cross. A row of windows divided by numerous mullions surmounts these arches, and from the corners rise other graceful columns forming a lofty vault.

"The two lateral transepts are converted into chapels, one of which is dedicated to Saint Joseph, the other to the Sacred Heart. Beside the church extends a garden ornamented with a magnificent statue of Saint Ignatius Loyola. In the rear, a fine villa, called Manresa, serves at once as a presbytery and a house of retreat for those desiring temporary seclusion. The view of the interior of the church gives but a poor idea of its beauties, especially as many embellishments have been recently added. The walls of the choir and the transepts have been fittingly decorated by six large paintings. Above the main altar is a reproduction of "Our Lady of the Wayside," in the transepts "The Apparition of Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary," "The Holy Family," "The Agony of Christ" and the "Death of Saint Joseph."

These meritorious works are from the brush of the celebrated Roman painter, Enrico Bottoni.

To be admired also are several stained-glass windows, the work of Quebec artists and decorators,¹ which throw a soft and rosy light upon the general tone of the transepts. These represent the numerous saints of the Society of Jesus, together with the Heart of Jesus as it appeared to Blessed Margaret Mary, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary pierced by a sword, and encircled by a wreath of roses. A series of windows of larger size completes the charm of interior decoration. The idea was to reproduce all the mysteries of the Rosary. The dolorous mysteries executed by the Parisian artist Cabannes, in the Way of the Cross, are supplemented by the joyful and the glorious mysteries, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, the Assumption, and the Coronation in Heaven. The windows and the entire set of paintings are the gifts of the faithful of Quebec, whose generosity will doubtless be rewarded by the holy Protectress of the Sanctuary.

It may be of use to some of our readers, perhaps, to say a few words in regard to the house of Manresa, since a residence therein enables one to see more clearly the true road to be chosen, and fills one with renewed ardor for the journey thereon. Villa Manresa is open to all those, both priests and laymen, who wish to retire from the world for

¹ Messrs. Bernard Leonard and Wallace J. Fisher.

a time, in order to consider more seriously the needs of their souls. The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius are given in person by the reverend director of the house, at the present time Reverend Father Désy, S. J.



INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH

The book of Spiritual Exercises composed by Saint Ignatius, and praised by Rome as no other volume has been, contains a method of spirituality wonderfully effective. Saint Francis of Sales said in his time that the book had converted

more souls than it contained letters, and Saint Charles Borromeo proclaimed it a school of sanctity. Other lights of the Church, as the Venerable de Blois, Blessed Canisius, and Suarez, have designated it the new school of Divine Wisdom, the model of asceticism, the swiftest road to high perfection, the infallible remedy for maladies of the soul, and the best equipped arsenal for the warfare with hell.

For how many men of the world would a retreat of a few days each year at Manresa be the means of regulating their lives and saving their souls! How many young men would find in its seclusion and peace, the light of direction as to their choice of life! How many souls, in fact, called by an interior voice to a higher state of perfection than their present one, would find grace and strength to listen to this voice! Without doubt the spirit listeth where it wills, but it is in solitude and prayer that the spirit speaks most clearly to those who seek to hear it in sincerity and truth. And it is incontestible that the Exercises of Saint Ignatius are among the best instruments to lead to this end.



VIEW OF THE NEW MAIN ALTAR



OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE

Our Lady of the Wayside
Is Queen of earth and heaven,
And yet to us in mercy
As mother she is given.
Smile on us, sweetest Mother!
And, lest our feet should stray,
O Lady of the Wayside!
Watch o'er us on our way.

This is your holy picture,
To Saint Ignatius dear,
And oft he prayed before it
As we are praying here.
Would that his faith and fervor
Burned in us as we pray;
O Lady of the Wayside!
Watch o'er us on our way.

O Lady of the Wayside!
Our way is rough and long,
Howe'er we may beguile it
With prayer and holy song.
Your loving smile, dear Mother,
Will turn our night to day.
O Lady of the Wayside!
Watch o'er us on our way.

My dying hour, how near art thou?
Or near or far, my head I bow
 Before God's ordinance supreme;
 But ah, how priceless then will seem
Each moment rashly squandered now!
Teach me, for thou canst teach me, how
These fleeting instants to endow
 With worth, that may the past redeem
 My dying hour.

My barque, that late with buoyant prow
The sunny waves did gaily plough,
 Now through the sunset's fading gleam
 Drifts dimly shoreward in a dream.
I feel the land breeze on my brow,
 My dying hour!

M. RUSSELL, S. J.





PAINTING OVER MAIN ALTAR
CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE, QUEBEC.

II.—THE DEVOTION ¹

WE are all travellers upon this earth, pilgrims on our way toward the kingdom of heaven. To confide our journey to the protection of Mary, Mother of God, such is the design of the Church when she puts on our lips the words of the *Ave Maris Stella*,

Iter para tutum — Protect our pilgrimage.

Jesus Christ himself did not wish to be exempt from this law. He has travelled over the road we must take to reach Heaven, thereby to encourage us by His example, and to gain for us by His labor and suffering, the light and grace necessary for our guidance. It was even the same with Mary: her earthly existence was a continual pilgrimage. But the lives of Jesus and Mary bear even more than ours the character of a journey, for they were, even more than we, strangers upon this earth. Jesus was the Good Shepherd who had come to seek His straying sheep, and Mary was the woman of the Gospel, who, having lost her groat, lit a candle and searched until she found it. She even sacrificed her only Son, to find us and make us her children by adoption. A pilgrim sorely tried, she knows how to sympathize with the poor children of earth and how to guide them in the way that leads to heaven. That is why we repeat with the Church: *Iter para tutum* — Protect us on our pilgrimage. This work of protection she performs in various ways.

¹ Dr John Theodore Laurent.

I. SHE TEACHES US HOW TO WALK IN
THE RIGHT PATH

Many by-ways, and many diversions turn us aside from the true object of life, but only one sure road is there to conduct us to the proper end. Our Divine Saviour has said so clearly: "The road which leads to perdition is wide, and many there be that walk therein; but narrow is the door which leads to the true path, and few who find it."¹ "Take pains," said He again, "to enter by the narrow door, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter there who cannot."²

The true and certain way, that which leads surely to the kingdom of Heaven, is the imitation of Jesus Christ: the practice of abnegation, mortification of the senses, and the crushing of our own wills. But the world with its false maxims and perverse examples, the demon, well versed in arts and wiles, our own passions that blind us — these are the enemies that are leagued together to drag us into affections directed wholly by the vanities of this earth. If we are unfortunate enough to choose the path beset by these evils, we shall be forced to write at the end of the journey: "We have taken the false road, and the light of justice does not shine upon us. We have wearied ourselves in the pursuit of iniquity, and we have trodden in difficult places, but the way of the Lord we have missed."³

If, on the contrary, we call upon Mary, she will preserve us from this calamity. Mother of Eternal Wisdom, spouse of the Holy Ghost, she has at her disposal the ineffable treasures of light and good counsel. She holds them in reserve for her ignorant children to guide and protect them, and to assist them by her motherly grace. The Church puts upon her virgin lips these words of Scripture: "I am the Mother

¹ MATT. vii. 13. 14. ² LUC. xiii. 14.

³ WISDOM. v. 6. 7. ⁴ ECCL. xxiv. 24. 25.

of pure love, of fear, of science, and of hope. In me is all the grace of the way and of truth. Come to me."¹ Yes, we will find in her the means to understand and to follow truth. "I am wisdom, I will dwell in counsel. Mine are



VILLA MANRESA

counsel and equity; mine, prudence and strength."¹ The Church also gives to Mary the glorious titles of "Mirror of Justice, Temple of Divine Wisdom, Virgin Most Wise, and

¹ PROV. viii. 12, 14.² ST. PET. ii. 11.³ GAL. v. 24.

Mother of Good Counsel." Let us address her, then, with confidence this prayer of the *Ave Maris Stella* :

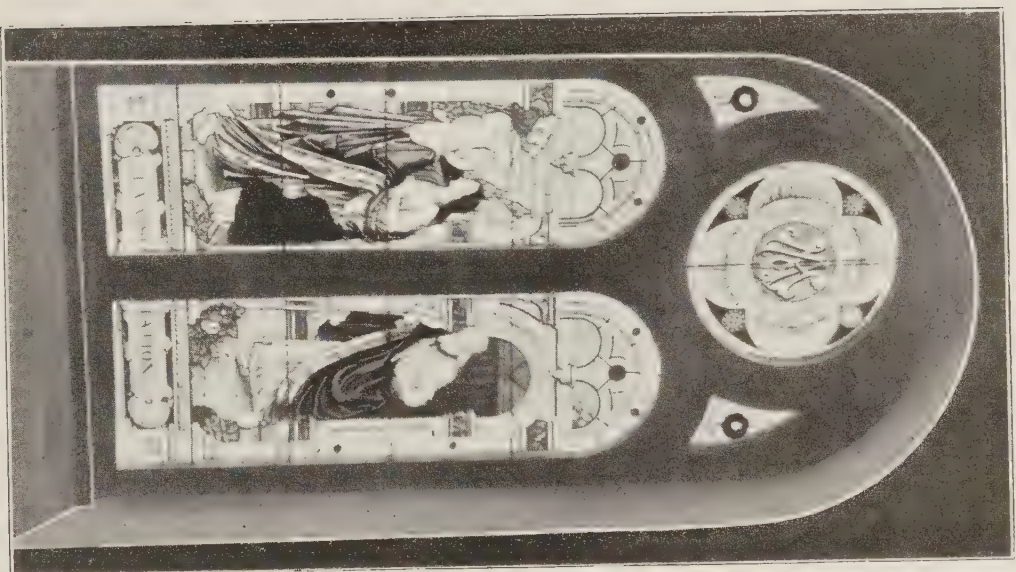
*Profer lumen cæcis,
Vitam præsta puram,
Iter para tutum.*

" O Mary, enlighten the blind,
Give us a holy life,
Protect our path."

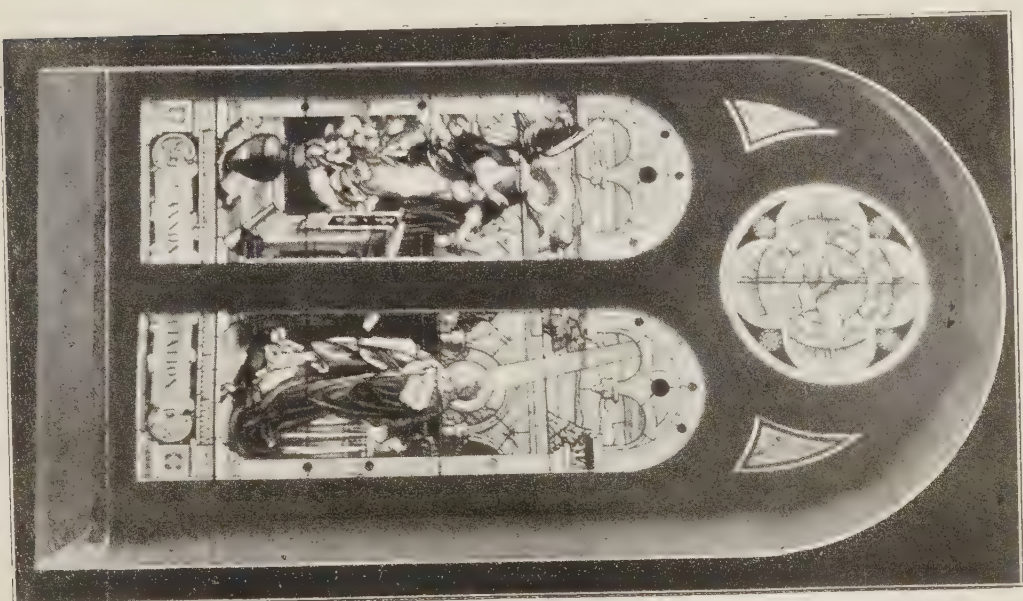
II. SHE ASSURES PERSEVERANCE IN THE RIGHT ROAD

The enemies who seek to close the right road to us are the same who seek to make us abandon it for the broad road of perdition. The world, the seductions of the flesh, the powers of hell themselves, endeavor unceasingly to prevent us from following Jesus Christ. That is why the Prince of Apostles gives us this warning, "My well-beloved, consider yourselves, I pray you, as strangers and pilgrims, and repress your carnal desires which threaten the loss of your soul."² And Saint Paul in his turn says, "Those who are of Jesus Christ have crucified their flesh, with its vices and concupiscence."³

In this constant war against our evil inclinations, in this crucifixion of the flesh, we have need of continual assistance. Our Lord has given us, therefore, the Sacraments of His Church, and above all the Holy Eucharist, in which is the source of life eternal. But if the poisoned breath of concupiscence has already corrupted our hearts and inclined them to evil, then the fountains of salvation fill us only with disgust, and we weary of divine things as the Israelites wearied of the manna in the desert. It is necessary, then, that our will be promptly fortified. This interior help will be given us by none other than the Holy Ghost. An exterior assistance such as the good angels know how to lend us is also useful.



THE VISITATION



THE ANNUNCIATION

Now Mary can obtain for us help from both those sources, for she is the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and the Queen of the Angels. By her powerful intercession with God, she can obtain for us the grace necessary to lead us to victory. Her protection suffices to overcome interior temptations and vanquish outer enemies. "I am the mother of fear," says she; that is to say, the fear of God, the greatest gift of the Holy Ghost. "He who hears me will not be confounded, and he who works upon my side will not sin."¹ "The strength of God is in me," says she again by the mouth of the Wise Man, "the kings reign by me."² For this reason the Church calls the Blessed Virgin: "the Virgin most Powerful," "Help of Christians," "Tower of David," "Tower of Ivory." Let us send to her also this cry of confidence:

*Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.
Iter para tutum.*

"Deliver us from evil,
Ask all blessings for us.
Protect our pilgrimage."

III. SHE SOFTENS THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE WAY

It happens often that the difficulties of the journey, and the hardships that one meets there, discourages the traveller. He falls by the wayside and never reaches the goal. That is especially true of the journey to eternity. However short our life may be, it is long enough to admit of many afflictions. Who among us does not often cry with Job, "The life of man upon earth is a warfare, and its joys are like those of the hired soldier. As the slave sighs after repose, so does the mercenary long for the end of the struggle."³ Who among us has not breathed the sigh of David, "Oh Lord, let me know my end, and the number of days which

¹ ECCL. xxiv. 24. 30. ² PROV. viii. 14. 15. ³ PROV. vii. 12.



remains for me to live, for I am only a stranger here! Oh! pardon my sins that I may taste a little repose before I go farther and disappear.”¹ In the stress of sadness and fatigue we ought to seek strength and consolation in the divine promises of the recompense which awaits us in heaven. But such is our weakness that often these holy thoughts are powerless to revive our courage. Even when Christian hope sustains our souls, the thought of death chills us with fright, or the length of the road still to run overcomes us. And moreover, who can hope to reach the promised land without passing through the burning desert of expiation?

¹ Ps. xxxviii. 5. 6. 13. 14.

Wherever we cast our eyes we see only causes for sadness. Thus we have need of a balm for our wounds, and of consolation for our weary souls. There is only one mother capable of satisfying our needs. "I am," she says, "the Mother of Love and of Hope," that is to say, of love which dissipates coldness and overcomes fatigue; of hope, that encourages. "Come to me, you who long for me, and I will fill you with my graces. For my spirit is sweeter than honey, and my inheritance on high sweeter than the rays of honey."¹

The best of mothers is not more desirous of giving pleasure to her offspring than is our Holy Mother anxious to fortify and console her spiritual children by all the gifts of grace, of which the Lord has made her the repository. Holy Church gives her, justly then, the titles of "Virgin most sweet," "Consoler of the afflicted," "Virgin most amiable," and the salutations, "Our life, our sweetness and our hope." Let us say with confidence these words of the holy hymn:

*Monstra te esse Matrem,
Bona cuncta posce.
Iter para tutum.*

"Show thyself our Mother,
Implore for us all blessings.
Protect our pilgrimage."

¹ ECCL. xxiv. 24. 28.

IV. SHE GIVES THE GRACE OF FINAL PERSEVERANCE

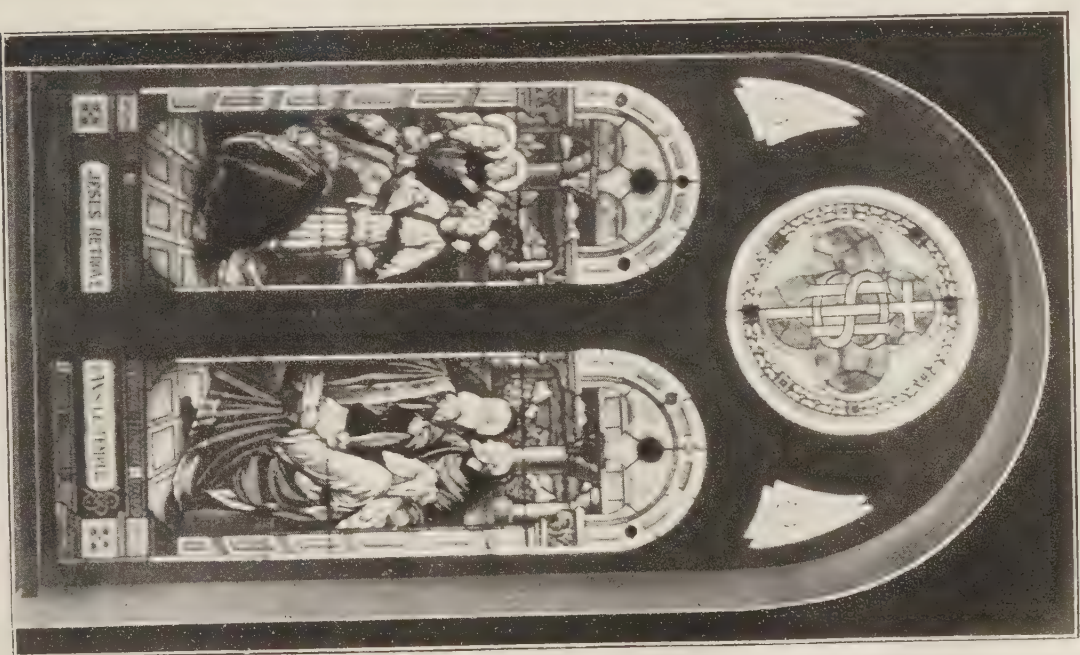
To begin well is one thing; to persevere is better; but to end well is everything. One can never appreciate a successful voyage until the terminus is reached. It is the same with our earthly pilgrimage. As long as we live, we shall have over us the danger of choosing a false route, and of losing our souls. A wise advice is this, "Let him who is standing take heed lest he fall." Death alone will decide our place. "The tree remains where it falls."¹

As a general thing, it is true to say that as a man lives, so will he die. For this reason we ought to watch ourselves continually in order that we may not miss the divine way of the Commandments, nor be surprised by death in a state of mortal sin. Therefore the Apostle says, "Work out your salvation in fear and trembling."² But the Church teaches us that perseverance in well-doing is proof of a special assistance from God, and this assistance is able to render firm him who stands just, as it is able to uplift him who has fallen.

No one can count with absolute certainty on this spiritual assistance. We have every hope, however, that having begun the good work of our salvation, the divine mercy will help us to complete it. In this hope we ought to fortify ourselves by prayer, and our prayers being weak, we ought to hasten to Mary, our most powerful advocate. She will know how to obtain for us the grace of a happy death, she, who, in company with Jesus, fortified Saint Joseph in the hour of his agony, and who received at the foot of the cross the title of "Mother of Men." "Happy," she assures us, "is the man attentive to my voice. He who finds me will find life, and will be saved; but he who sins against me will destroy his soul. All who hate me love death."³

How consoling to be able to say, "My eternal salvation rests in the hands of Mary." Therefore the Church calls

¹ ECCL. XI. 3. ² PHIL. II. 12. ³ PROV. VIII 34-36.



her, "Mother of Divine Grace, Refuge of Sinners, Health of the Sick, Cause of our Joy, Star of the Morning, and Gate of Heaven." The Church instructs us to address to her each day this prayer, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."¹

But a happy death, accompanied by divine grace, is the only way in which we may be conducted to a vision of the Supreme Being. Let us repeat then over and over the following holy hymn:

*Iter para tutum,
Ut videntes Jesum
Semper collætémur.*

"Protect our pilgrimage,
Let us behold Jesus and share
Eternal joy with Him."

¹ PROV. viii. 34-36.



